

# Career Development Discussions

at Umeå University

Guide for career development discussions between  
managers and employees



# Career development discussion between managers and employees

One aspect of the managerial role involves having a number of structured, planned discussions with employees in which dialogue is used as a method. The annual career development discussion is part of the managerial role. The employee's responsibilities and normal duties include participating in these career development discussions.

The career development discussion is an important strategic tool for the manager and employee;

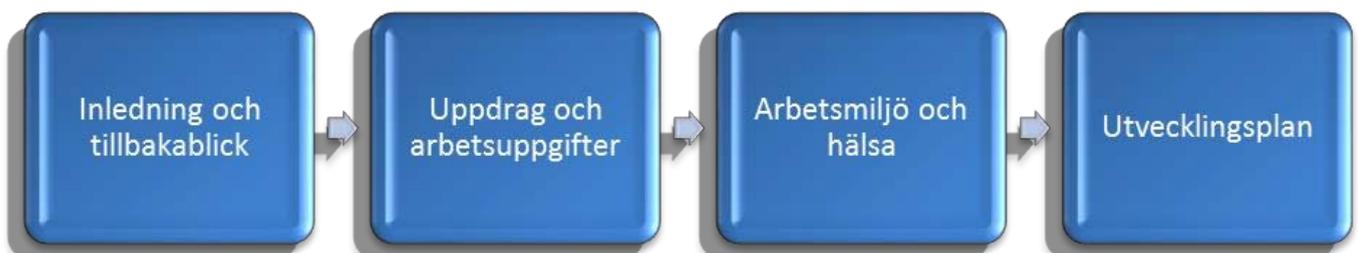
- driving operations forward in accordance with the *Operational Plan* and the *Skills Provision Plan*
- for systematic work environment management, clarified in the new work environment ordinance "Organisational and Social Work Environment" (AFS 2015:4)
- for *collaboration between manager and employee* through our *collaboration agreement "Collaboration for Development"* (Ref: 301-1166-13).

Your department/unit's operational planning and career development discussions should be based on the university's objectives and strategies so that everyone can see the connections and link to the organisation's remit and objectives. The career development discussion is also an important occasion at which managers and employees can harmonise mutual expectations and provide feedback on the past year.

## Structure and content of the discussion

The manager is responsible for leading the discussion. The discussion starts with a short look back at the past year and then moves from the present to looking ahead. The principal focus is to be on the future, thus contributing to improving operations, the employee and the workplace.

The discussion is also to contribute to a good work environment by means of the manager using the discussion as a way to identify organisational and social risks in the work environment.



In other words, the content of the discussion can be divided into two main themes: tasks and duties, and work environment and health. The discussion is to result in an individual development plan.

# Guide for the career development discussion

There follows a career development discussion guide for both managers and employees.

1. Use the questions in this template to prepare for the discussion.
2. Allow the discussion to last between 60 and 90 minutes, preferably in a neutral environment
3. Ensure that the discussion can take place uninterrupted and switch off your phones
4. The manager leads the discussion, asks questions, replies to the employee's questions and provides them with feedback
5. The employee answers and poses questions and provides feedback to the manager
6. What is said in the discussion is to remain between the manager and employee
7. "Park" questions that tend to take a lot of time – do not forget to schedule a new meeting if needed!
8. Respect each other's opinions and experiences
9. Be open to alternative solutions
10. The employee brings along last year's development plan and is responsible for filling out the development plan for the coming year
11. You end by summarising and evaluating the discussion

Remember that the career development discussion is a forward-looking discussion. The manager allocates sufficient time to discuss matters relating to the future. The manager selects some questions and adds their own questions if needed so that the career development discussion is suitably adapted to both operations and the individual.

## Retrospective view

The purpose of a retrospective view is to follow up and provide feedback about what has happened since the previous career development discussion by jointly evaluating performance and results.

1. Is there something that you specifically want to bring up or that you want answered during the discussion?
2. What has happened since the last career development discussion? Review last year's development plan. What has been done? What is the result?
3. How have the set goals been achieved? Are there any factors that have influence achievement of goals?
4. What aspects the past year are you most satisfied with?

## Task and duties

1. How do you view your task and your duties? (base your assessment on the operational plan and other relevant documents)
2. How would you summarise your work and your performance over the past year?
3. What you are most proud of or satisfied with?
4. Do you feel that your strengths, talents and expertise have been used optimally?
5. How do you feel that your task and duties can be developed or changed?
6. What challenges do your task and work situation entail over the year ahead?
7. Are there any new duties or other development that you would welcome, if an opportunity presented itself?
8. How do you currently contribute to the development and results of your working groups?
9. What conditions do you need to achieve your goals? How can I as a manger help with this?
10. How do you believe that the unit/department can be developed?
11. How can you help with this?

## Work environment and health

1. Are you happy with your workplace? Make a mark on the line and explain your reasoning.

  
Not at all happy Very happy

2. What do you consider to be the most important action that can be taken to improve happiness with the workplace?
3. What is your perception of the work climate, collaboration and participation in the department/unit and your various working groups? Is there any bullying, harassment or discrimination?
4. In what way do you contribute to a good work environment?
5. How do you view the organisation/unit/department from an equal opportunities perspective?
6. How do you view the responsibilities, demands and expectations that are placed on you? Are they balanced? Are there unclear expectations?
7. Do you feel that there are organisational uncertainties that impair effective cooperation?

8. Do you have the authorisation and resources needed to carry out your work? Are they balanced?
9. How do you perceive your workload? Are you given the opportunity to recover?
10. Do you feel that there are health risks associated with your working hours?
11. Is it clear what is to be prioritised if there is a lack of time?
12. How do you perceive your health and your stress level? Is there a balance between work and recovery?
13. How do you perceive your physical work environment (safety, ergonomics, noise, lighting, etc.)?
14. Are you given the support you need from me as a manager and/or others to handle your work situation and your work environment?
15. For employees who are 60 years of age or older: How have you planned for the next few years leading up to your retirement? Are there any special needs that need to be considered regarding your work situation?

## Individual career development plan

The manager and employee are to jointly draw up an individual career development plan that addresses development needs on the basis of the completed dialogue about the past, present and future. The employee is responsible for filling out the career development plan for the coming year and their longer-term ambitions. Each individual career development plan forms the basis for follow-up at the next career development discussion.

1. If we summarise the discussion, what is the most important thing that we have discussed?
2. Based on your task and duties, do you see a need for in-service training in the coming year? What, how and when?

### **The career development plan is to contain:**

- Tasks and goals for the coming year and possibly the employee's long-term ambitions.
- Agree with the employee about which indicators are to be used to make the goals objectively measurable – how are the goals to be followed up?
- Specify what is to be developed, improved or done. Specify what concrete action need to be taken to do this.
- Who is responsible for the activity? Specify how follow-up and review is to be conducted. When is the activity to be complete?

Check that you have included all the activities you talked about during the discussion.

The manager and employee both sign the plan in order to confirm that both have perceived the discussion in the same way. Each is given a copy of the documentation.

# Individual career development plan for \_\_\_\_\_

## Based on operational goals – Individual tasks and goals

| My tasks | My goals for the coming year | How do I know that the goals have been achieved? (Proposed objectively measurable indicators for following up the goals) | My longer-term goals and ambitions |
|----------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
|          |                              |  |                                    |
|          |                              |  |                                    |
|          |                              |  |                                    |

## Need for in-service training

| What needs to be developed, improved or done? | What concrete action needs to be taken to do this? | Who is responsible? | Follow-up/Review | Complete? |
|---|--|---------------------|------------------|-----------|
|   |  |                     |                  |           |
|   |  |                     |                  |           |

Umeå, date: .....

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Employee

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Manager

You both sign the plan to confirm that you both perceive the discussion in the same way. You each keep a copy of the document.